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B'nai B'rith President Exhibits Copy

New Soviet Anti-Semitic Book

By Gershon Jacobsen
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An official Soviet government body has published a new 96-page book for popular consumption which defames Judaism and attacks religious Soviet Jews as a sinister force committed to subversion and "money-grubbing." Label A. Katz, president of the B'nai B'rith, reported yesterday. He exhibited a copy of the book, entitled "Contemporary Judaism and Zionism."

At a press conference at the Waldorf-Astoria, Mr. Katz said he got the book during a recent visit to Europe. He said it was published in February of this year at Kishinev by the State Publishing House of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic.

A copy of the book has been sent to the State Department and a protest to the Soviet government will be made soon, Mr. Katz said.

Unlike an earlier volume, "Judaism Without Embellishment," put out by the Soviet Ukrainian Academy of Science in 1953, which used Nazi-like caricatures and an extensive glossary of crude anti-Semitic diatribes, the new booklet does not include cartoons. Instead it denounces Judaism by exploiting, as scholarly research, vulgar stereotypes, Mr. Katz said.

"Judaism Without Embellishment" was withdrawn earlier this year after condemnation by Western public opinion, including Communist groups in Western Europe and elsewhere. It was reported that Premier Nikita Khrushchev himself ordered the book taken out of circulation.

'ALIEN SPIRIT'

The new publication describes the Jewish religion as "alien to the Soviet spirit." It accuses Israeli diplomats in Moscow of engaging in espionage activity for the CIA, and links Washington, Tel Aviv and Jews in Soviet synagogues in an "international Jewish conspiracy."

Author of the book is F. Mayatsky, whom Mr. Katz identified as a Soviet propagandist, a "specialist in anti-Jewish writing."

Last April the Ideological Commission of the Soviet Communist party condemned the Ukrainian publication "Judaism Without Embellishment," stating that it was an isolated mistake.

Yesterday the president of B'nai B'rith charged that in view of the new evidence no efforts have been made to withdraw similarly crude anti-Semitic material, officially produced, from public sale and dissemination.

Mr. Katz contended that the Ideological Commission's action was a "transparent shame in view of the flow of anti-Jewish literature that now circulates in many parts of Soviet Russia." He suggested that the new book and "similar material" fit the pattern of a "calculated program to erase Jewish life from the Soviet scene . . . and its brutal suppressions and harassments, has the encouragement of authoritative bodies such as the party's Ideological Commission."

Mr. Katz noted that in the bibliography of the Mayatsky book many of the sources used are from articles published during the "black period" of the Stalin days of 1953, at which time official Soviet anti-Semitism was the government line.

Moldavia, with an estimated Jewish population of 100,000, has the largest proportion of Jews of any Soviet republic. Nearly 42,000 live in Kishinev, the capital city of the republic. Kishinev was the site of Czarist pogroms at the turn of the century that evoked protests throughout the world.